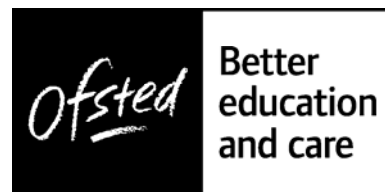


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Mr Bill Morris  
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28 April 2006

Dear Mr Morris

**SCHOOLS WHERE THE PUPILS' BEHAVIOUR HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A CONCERN BY INSPECTION: MONITORING INSPECTION OF FULLHURST COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

**Introduction**

Following my visit with Michael McIlroy HMI and Nina Bee, Valerie Greatrex and Gerald Griffin, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 4 and 5 April 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was a first monitoring inspection as part of the programme of visits to schools where the pupils' behaviour has been identified as a concern by inspection.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of receipt of this letter.

**Evidence**

Inspectors observed the college's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the principal, nominated senior and middle managers, teachers, groups of students, the chair of the governing body and representatives from the local authority (LA).

## Context

The college's challenging context was reported at the time of the last inspection in April 2005. Over the last year the college has been involved with planning a complete new building, under the Building Schools for the Future programme. In addition, it is also seeking specialist humanities college status from October 2006.

## Achievement and standards

Standards of attainment in the 2005 national Key Stage 3 tests in English, mathematics and science were below average overall. In English and mathematics around 60% of students gained at least the expected Level 5. In science the proportion was less than half. Whilst achievement has been good in English over the previous three years, the progress made by students in 2005 was below average. The progress of more able students is of particular concern since too many did not build on their promising Key Stage 2 results.

At Key Stage 4 the standards attained in the 2005 GCSE/GNVQ examinations were significantly below average and were lower than 2004. Only 27% of students gained at least five A\*–C grades, 67% achieved at least 5 A\*–G grades and 11%, a very high proportion, failed to achieve any GCSE passes. The results show that too many students made inadequate progress in their two years in Key Stage 4.

To some extent the decline in results in 2005 reflects the changes in the college's student intake over the last five years and the significant increase in numbers of students with challenging behaviour. The college considers that it has achieved success in meeting the social needs of many of its most disadvantaged students. Nonetheless, achievement is unsatisfactory overall because, even given these challenging circumstances, students did not make as much progress as they should.

Current data indicates that the college is on course to make a significant increase on last year's results, although it is not confident that it will meet its challenging targets.

In lessons, the standards of students' work are generally below age related expectations. Students' progress, although satisfactory overall, was very variable. The quality and pace of learning varied widely between the most effective lessons and those where learning lacked sufficient focus or purpose. In too many lessons the specific objectives and outcomes of learning lacked clarity and teachers did not assess the progress that students had made or what they needed to do next. Weaknesses in basic skills, particularly in

literacy and numeracy, are an impediment for many students in making more rapid progress. The most effective teaching is systematic and sharply focused in addressing these weaknesses.

The college has sufficient assessment data to analyse attainment and progress at a whole college level. However, assessment information is not used effectively in the drive to raise standards.

### **Personal development and well-being**

Students' attitudes and behaviour have improved since the last inspection and are satisfactory overall. Around the buildings and during break periods the students were generally well behaved and interacted sensibly. They were friendly towards visitors and most spoke sensibly and maturely. There were a few incidents of boisterous behaviour in corridors. Of greater concern, however, is the fact that a small number of students choose not to moderate their language or behaviour in the presence of adults or visitors. Students report that bullying is not an issue and that the college deals quickly and effectively with any incidents that occur.

In lessons, students were generally compliant and work purposefully. Although many students have passive attitudes to learning, enough were prepared to volunteer answers in order to sustain whole class discussions. When teaching was lively and interesting all students worked hard and collaborated well with their peers. Students enjoy good teaching and many say they particularly enjoy practical lessons. However, some older students said that lessons are boring, particularly when they have to sit and listen for long periods. Passivity and low level disruption were linked with dull or weaker teaching. Negative attitudes are also manifested in the careless work and graffiti in many exercise books.

The college's revised behaviour policy is beginning to have a positive impact. Analysis of information on detentions and exclusions shows improvement. Both fixed period and permanent exclusions are showing a decline compared with the previous year. The learning centre, along with the internal isolation unit, is operating effectively to support students with behavioural problems. Careful monitoring supports students' re-entry to school, following exclusion. Closer contact with parents is helping build trust between families and school.

The rewards scheme is popular with most students, many of whom like working to earn recognition and respond to the lure of certificates for good work. The 'student voice' is well developed. In a recent survey, 87% of students said they feel confident they are listened to by the college and that their views are taken seriously. The student council has influenced lunchtime

meal choices and the provision of social spaces. Some responsibilities are given to students but the college does not fully exploit this area.

Attendance remains below the national average but is improving. Half termly attendance averages this year are significantly better than those for the last academic year. This good progress is the result of a broad range of successful strategies. Students feel that several of these are having a significant impact. Firstly, the college's closer involvement with parents enables them to actively support improving attendance. Secondly, rewards for good attendance are highly regarded by students although they feel that some dull teaching discourages good attendance. The college is meeting current targets for attendance but future targets need to be more challenging to bring the college closer to the national averages.

The level of unauthorised absence is well above the national average but is reducing. The college takes a robust line with parents on authorising absence and this will enable it to track accurately any future improvement.

Rules and procedures regarding lateness are robust. Punctuality to college and to lessons was not a problem during the visit but the college's figures show that lateness remains an issue for a small but significant number of students. The new electronic registers give a clear picture of attendance for the college and in lessons. The problem with internal truancy is successfully being addressed by using support staff to patrol corridors during the day. The college is now well placed to use the detailed and accurate data on punctuality and attendance, collected this year, to track patterns and assess the effectiveness of improvement strategies.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in April 2005:

- raise levels of attendance and eliminate internal truancy—good progress
- improve the behaviour of the small minority of students who disrupt lessons—satisfactory progress.

### **Quality of provision**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although it varies widely from outstanding to inadequate. The best lessons are well planned, sharply focused and skilfully managed to promote good learning. They are effectively resourced often using information and communication technology (ICT) well to reinforce and build on students' understanding. A good example of this was seen when Year 8 students developed their understanding of similes and metaphors during an English lesson. They responded positively to the pictures, sound and text skilfully presented on the interactive whiteboard.

Their contributions were valued so that they were motivated and confident to ask for further explanation when they needed it.

In general, relationships between adults and students are good. This enables teachers to deal effectively with challenging behaviour that would otherwise disrupt learning. Students are well supported by the teaching assistants.

The less effective lessons were inadequately planned and held low expectations of students' learning and behaviour. In these lessons teachers tended to speak over students' chatter and distractive behaviour was not dealt with effectively, which then led to wider disruption. Weak planning outlined what students would learn but did not consider how they would learn most effectively. Moreover, teachers did not match work to the wide range of needs and abilities in each class. In too many lessons the students relied on teachers for information and work lacked challenge and pace.

There is wide variation in the quality, use and effectiveness of assessment. The best questioning probes, extends and assesses the students' understanding but in too many lessons questions were closed, untargeted and failed to assess what students knew. There is similar variation in marking. Good examples clearly inform the students what they need to do to improve. Students are given targets and predicted grades for GCSE but they do not always have a clear idea of their short term targets and what they need to do to improve. End of lesson plenaries did not regularly assess the quality and depth of students' learning.

The college is taking suitable steps to broaden the curriculum offered both at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in order to better meet the learning needs of students. Provision for religious education has been strengthened.

Students receive satisfactory care, guidance and support. Good features include the 'nurture group' where students are given a curriculum that is carefully tailored to meet their needs and, in particular, focuses well on the acquisition of basic literacy and social skills. The Learning Support Unit effectively enables students with behavioural difficulties to remain in school. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported by external specialists who come into school. In addition, the college is proactive in developing close links with its feeder primary schools in order to ease the transition of targeted and vulnerable students. Significant steps are taken to improve the students' literacy skills. Those students with social, behavioural and emotional issues are supported by primary learning mentors in order to ease their transition.

Although students are given good guidance in relation to the courses they are involved in, the academic guidance they receive is too variable. Marking does not guide the students sufficiently and data is not used effectively to inform students how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

The school's leadership has focused well on addressing the attendance and behaviour issues raised at the last inspection. A wide range of policies, procedures and initiatives has been introduced and these have led to clear improvement. This is because the college is clear about what needs to be done and staff have been galvanised to collaborate with the consistent application of agreed procedures, for example issuing reward certificates and a 'zero tolerance' of poor behaviour in lessons. This has been achieved at a time when a considerable amount of the leadership capacity and energy has been necessarily absorbed in planning the college's longer term development. The principal has guided this work effectively and has balanced well the college's short term priorities and its strategic development. Despite some poor accommodation, many teachers create a stimulating environment for learning. Nonetheless, although the college has taken suitable short term steps to raise standards, there has been insufficient focus on strengthening teaching and learning.

The roles and responsibilities of curriculum leaders in monitoring behaviour issues have been suitably extended. The leaders have also influenced the school's policies and procedures in order to strengthen the system of sanctions and rewards.

The college's self-evaluation is accurate and unequivocal in identifying areas of weakness that require improvement. Moreover, it is now more soundly based on the collation and analysis of data. The college has made effective use of external support from the local authority and has developed productive links with neighbouring secondary and primary schools. It has demonstrated that it has the capacity to improve.

The governing body is supportive of the college and well informed about its progress and priorities for improvement.

The college has worked hard to foster links with parents. This work has ensured that the college enjoys a high level of support from its parents. There was very good attendance at the annual progress review day.

## External support

The LA's good quality guidance and support is having a significant impact on the improvement of behaviour and attendance. The LA has supported the college well in its setting and monitoring of targets to measure improvements in both areas. In addition, the LA has provided some additional resources and has facilitated productive links with other institutions. The college feels the support and guidance provided by the LA in the areas of behaviour and attendance are good.

## Main Judgements

The college has made satisfactory progress towards improving the students' behaviour but inadequate progress towards raising standards. This visit has raised some concerns about the standard of education provided and the school's performance will be monitored.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Focus more sharply on improving the quality of learning in lessons, particularly with better differentiation of work, in order to improve students' rates of progress and raise standards.
- Give students clearer guidance on what they need to do to improve by making more effective use of assessment information and marking.
- Sustain the work on improving attendance and behaviour.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children and Young People's Services for Leicester City.

Yours sincerely

Paul Brooker  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**